[For the text in French of the Electoral Law of 1950 for Lebanon see 57: Davis, MI Middle East, category 116, pp. 307-319.]

DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS OF THE LEBANON

By ELIAHU EPSTEIN

THE Lebanese Republic covers an area of about 10,000 sq. k.* The population was last assessed in the Order of the President dated June 17, 1945, as the number of citizens registered in the registration records on December 31, 1942. This Order also referred to a number of Lebanese who had emigrated but had retained their Lebanese citizenship.

The Order in question was published in connection with the elections to the Lebanese Parliament. Although the Moslem communities disagreed with the correctness of the number given, the Order remains the official document pending the holding of a general Census which will determine the figures more precisely.

The following is the table which served as the foundation for fixing the population of the Lebanon as on January 1, 1943:†

Communities.	Inhabitants.	Emigrants.	Total.
Maronites	328,200	90,276	418,476
Sunni	225,594	4,933	230,527
Shi'ah	200,648	2,367	203,015
Greek Orthodox	126,658	13,693	140,351
Druses	71,711	4,863	76,574
Greek Catholics	61,396	13,072	74,468
Armenian Orthodox (Gregorians)	58,105	68	58,173
Minorities	41,658	4,759	46,417
Total	1,084,400	159,371 ‡	1,243,880

The following are the estimated figures for the movement of population in the Lebanon, and the estimated natural increase:‡

Communities.	1932 Census.	End 1943.	Difference.	Percentage.
Sunni	179,687	225,594	45,907	25·5
Shi'ah	159,133	200,648	41,515	26·3
Druses	56,297	71,711	15,414	27·0
Maronites	289,620	328,200	38,580	13·0
Greek Catholics	55,495	61,396	6,901	10·5
Greek Orthodox	90,490	126,658	13,689	17·0

The instructive conclusions which can be drawn from these tables are:
(a) Most of the emigrants from the Lebanon and those who continue

* Since the demarcation of the Syro-Lebanese Frontier has not been completed, estimates of the area of the two States vary. The area of the Autonomous Sanjak of the Lebanon (1861-1915) was 3,700 kilometres and its population was 400,000.

† "La Syrie et l'Orient," Beirut, 20-15, 6, 1945.

‡ *Ibid.* The figures in these tables and the statistical calculations should be compared with similar sources on account of the backward methods used for demographical statistics in the Lebanon.

433. Where there is a religious population of Armenians, they are entitled to representation on the council by the addition of members over and above the regular number in proportion to their relative numerical importance in the community.[1]

434. The councils are elected for a term of four years and are renewed as a unit. Municipal elections take place on the third Sunday of May in electoral years.[2]

Basis of Representation.

Proportional religious representation is secured by the apportionment of the council seats among the various religious sects in conformity with their relative numerical strength in the electoral list.[3] Thus it is a fixed ratio based on potential voting strength rather than population figures. The allocation of seats is made by decree of the administrator subject to the approval of the Minister of the Interior. All electors vote for all the positions to be filled in their ward or municipality so that the votes of a majority sect may determine the choice of representatives for minority seats. One seat is reserved for minority sects having at least half but less than a whole electoral quotient. The allocation of seats is effected by the "list system" of proportional representation, the method being applied to registration rather than voting figures.

435. Qualifications for membership in the municipal councils are the same as for a seat in the national assembly as determined by Arrêté No. 1307 of March 10, 1922.[4] Candidates must be Lebanese citizens, at least twenty five years of age, literate, and in the enjoyment of full civil and political rights.[5] Aside from the general restrictions of the electoral law, the municipal law of 1922 expressly disqualifies the following —

1. Those deprived of their franchise.
2. Persons under tutelage or supervision of judicial council.
3. Persons exempted from municipal taxes or aided by any charitable organization.

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1 Loi du 10 Mars 1908, Journ. Off. No. 441, p. 1.

2 Arrêté No. 1036, 10 Fév. 1926, Journ. Off., No. F. 198.

3 Arrêté No. 1388, 10 Fév. 1926, Journ. Off., No. F. 198, Art. 10.

4 Arrêté No. 1388, loc. cit., Art. 7.

5 Recueil des Actes Administratifs du Haut Commissariat, Organisation Judiciaire, Reynaud), Vol. III, p. 197, Art. 1.

[illegible] Off. [illegible], p. 48 — [illegible]

§ 55 communities of the municipality.[1] In cases of dissolution or collective resignation a special delegation is named by the President of the Republic, who likewise appoints its president and vice-president, if any. The delegation contains from three to seven members depending upon the importance of the municipality. The duration of such a delegation may not exceed one year. It exercises all the powers of municipal council but is automatically dissolved when a council is reconstituted.[2]

Electoral Procedure.

§ 52. Municipal electoral procedure and qualifications are regulated
§ 144 by the national electoral law, Arrêté No. 1307 of March 16, 1924,
149 except that residence requirements are interpreted entirely in terms of municipal residence. Suffrage qualifications are the same as for national elections. The electorate consists of all male citizens 21 years of age having their real and principal establishment within the municipality where they must have resided for at least six months. Likewise, they must have conformed with the national census law of March 1, 1921. Absence because of status as minister of a recognized cult, as public functionary, or as soldier of the Syrian Legion, Levantine Gendarmerie, or French Army, does not disqualify.[3] The following categories are disqualified for the suffrage:—

1. Individuals deprived of their civil rights.
2. Individuals permanently deprived from holding public office.

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1 Ibid., Art. 31.

2 Arrêté in. 1308, loc. cit., Art. 32. The provision for dissolution and administration by an appointed Commission have been widely used as is shown by 46 dissolutions over a period of nine years among a total of sixty-two municipalities. Although the terms of such commissions is limited to one year, there is nothing to prevent the renewal of mandate or the appointment of a new commission. This seems to have been true to a considerable extent and has led to the conviction, commonly held, that the power of dissolution has been used for political reasons rather than because of administrative inefficiency or irregularities. It is a widely held belief that opposition administration has been resorted to and continued, in many cases, because of fear that election would bring into power an administration hostile to the central government or at least not so completely under its control. While it might be viewed that circumstances were such that no election could be depended upon to put in power a council of requisite ability, the fact that out of 46 dissolutions no reasons or statement in 30 of the orders of dissolution, although [illegible] required by law, leads color to the charge. (See Appendix).

3 Arrêté No. 1307, loc. cit., Art. 34. Under the Turkish regime suffrage qualifications included Turkish nationality, age of at least 25 years, possession of full civil and persons rights, freedom from sentence for crime, and payment of at least 5% Turkish pounds in taxes. (Young, loc. cit., Vol. I p. 76).

[illegible]

3. Individuals condemned for a crime or infamous offense involving a correctional penalty. Considered as infamous are theft, swindling, abuse of confidence, public outrage of decency, habitual excitation of minors to debauchery, vagabondage, and simple bankruptcy. 432 440 441

4. Individuals condemned to imprisonment for crime.

5. Individuals under judicial interdiction.

6. Insolvents not condemned for bankruptcy. Disqualification for this category holds for three years from declaration of insolvency.

7. Individuals condemned to imprisonment or more severe sentence for any violation of the electoral laws.[1]

A list of qualified voters known as the "electoral list" is drawn up by an appointed Registration Commission[2] and is revised annually from supplementary lists furnished by the mukhtars and presidents of municipalities. Upon the publication of this list ten days are allowed for the presentation of claims of error which are decided by the Registration Commission with right of appeal only on points of law. No one may be inscribed on the electoral list of more than one voting district. In case of duplicate registration through error the elector may choose which residence he desires to establish provided he fulfills the qualifications before the final closing of the electoral lists. All demands for such changes must be accompanied by a demand for the removal of the name from the former list.[3] 432 444

The electors are convoked by decree of the President of the Republic issued at least fifteen days before the election. In no case may the elections last more than seven days. Balloting always commences on a Sunday but may run for several consecutive days. The number of days, place, and time of voting are decreed by the administrator.[4] The polls must remain open at least six consecutive hours in municipalities of more than 500 inhabitants or, in case of a single day and hours of voting, at least nine consecutive hours. If a second balloting is necessary, the electors are automatically convoked for the following Sunday and such succeeding days as were provided in the original decree of convocation. The administrator is responsible for the publication of the necessary notices.[5]

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1 Ibid., Art. 15.
2 A permanent commission constituted under the national electoral law.
3 Arrêté No. 1838 loc. cit., Art. 17.
4 Arrêté No. 1837 loc. cit., Art. 24.
5 Ibid., Art. 28.

[SHOULD READ 1937 AND 1938 - CF. SECOND DRAFT, P. 47 -- ANALYST.]

1421 1444 When a municipal council is reduced by vacancies to three fourths of its normal membership a supplementary election is held within two months of the first vacancy, unless it occurs within six months of the next regular election. In this case a supplementary election is not held unless the membership is reduced to less than one half its normal number. If elected by wards, the supplementary election is held only in the wards concerned.[1]

The councillors are elected by direct universal manhood suffrage on the general ticket plan (*scrutin de liste*). However, a municipality if composed of several distinct and separated communities, as in the case of joint incorporation, or if possessing a population of more than 5000, may be divided into electoral districts or wards, each electing a number of councillors proportional to the number of inscribed electors in the ward. In no case shall such a ward have less than two members.[2] Division into wards is made by the administrator either upon his own initiative or upon the request of the administrative commission of the district, the municipal council concerned, or the electors themselves.[3] The administrator divides the municipality or wards into voting precincts (*bureaux de vote*), each of which votes on the general ticket of the entire municipality or ward of which it is a part.[4] In each precinct the administrator designates the polling place.[5] He likewise appoints a president for each voting bureau or precinct. The bureau president alone has police powers within the polls and no armed force may enter except at his request.[6] The bureau president must be named at least five days before the election. He is assisted by from two to four "assessors" who must be chosen from different religious sects represented in the precinct. Half of the assessors are appointed by the bureau president, the remainder are chosen by the electors present at the opening of the polls from among those of their own number who can read and write. One or two secretaries may be appointed having only a consultative voice in the voting bureau.[7] The bureau pre-

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1 Ibid., Art. 36.

2 Arrêté No. 1338, loc. cit., Art. 12.

3 Ibid., Art. 10.

4 Ibid., Art. 17.

5 Arrêté No. 1337, loc. cit., Art. 46.

6 Ibid., Art. 48.

7 Arrêté No. 1337, loc. cit., Art. 49. The provision for the selection of half of the assessors by the electors at the opening of the polls has not prevented changes of government control of the electoral machinery. These assessors are chosen by caucus or prior agreement with party leaders, the actual decision being made by the bureau president. Obviously it would be comparatively easy under this system for the government to control the counting procedure.

ident and at least half of the assessors must be present throughout 425
the electoral operations. This electoral board or voting bureau has 426
provisional jurisdiction over all questions arising out of the conduct
of the elections. All claims and decisions must be recorded together
with the reasons motivating the judgement.[1]

The bureau secretary is provided with an official copy of the electoral list. No one may vote whose name does not appear upon this list except such persons as may present a decision of the Registration Commission issued subsequently to the preparation of the list.[2] The voting of each elector is attested on the official list by the signature or initials of the secretary opposite the name of the elector.[3]

The ballot box has a single opening for the admission of the ballots. At the opening of the polls the box is closed and locked with two locks one key being retained by the bureau president, the other by the oldest of the assessors chosen by the electors.[4] Each voter presents his official certificate of identity (carte d'identité) to the secretary who checks the name against the electoral list. The reverse of the identity paper is then stamped with an indication of the precinct and the date. The secretary then announces the voter's name and the latter presents his folded ballot to the bureau president who deposits it in the ballot box. No official ballots are provided, the voter writing his own ballot on any piece of white paper. Ballots may be prepared by a candidate or groups of candidates and distributed outside the polls. The only restrictions are that they must not be on colored paper or bear any other external distinctive marks.[5]

Upon the closing of the polls the count is made by the bureau officials unless the number of ballots is more than three hundred. If this be the case a number of tellers may be appointed from among the literate electors present who shall be distributed at counting tables having at least four tellers each. If various candidates or

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1 Ibid., Art. 50.

2 Ibid., Art. 51.

3 Ibid., Art. 52.

4 Arrêté No. 1307, loc. cit., Art. 54.

5 Ibid., Art. 56. Even if the color restriction were rigorously enforced, as there is no uniformity of size and shape of the ballots prepared by candidates it is not difficult to determine the designation of a man's vote by a mere glance at the ballot which he commonly carries in his hand on entering the polls. Under the provisions of the Turkish law the voter placed his ballot in an envelope which was dropped, sealed, into the ballot box. (Young, loc. cit., Vol. I, p. 76).

lists of candidates have been presented they have the right to designate the additional tellers who shall then be distributed equally among the tables as far as possible. Upon the opening of the ballot box the total number of ballots is ascertained and checked against the official list. If the total is more or less than the vote recorded on the list, a minute is made to this effect. The bureau president then distributes the ballots to the different counting tables. One of the tellers reads each ballot in a loud voice, then passing it to another teller. The vote is recorded on specially prepared counting sheets. The electors are entitled to be present at the count and to circulate about the tables. If they challenge any of the proceedings, the bureau president and his assistants inspect the operations.[1]

Blank ballots, those not bearing sufficient designation or in which the voter may be known, those of colored paper or bearing any external mark of identification, and those bearing any remarks injurious to the candidates or the people are not included in the count but are attached to the process-verbal.[2] Also excluded are any votes for candidates who have failed to comply with the regulations governing declaration of candidatures.[3]

Immediately after the count the result is announced by the bureau president, and the ballots, other than those attached to the process-verbal, are burned in the presence of the electors.[4] When more than one voting precinct exists within an electoral circumscription, the proclamation of the result is made by the president of the central bureau to whom the various other bureau presidents must bring the process-verbal with attached ballots and the official check list.[5] A summary process-verbal is prepared at the central bureau and forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior and to the Registration Commission. Definitive announcement of the results is made by the Registration Commission after checking the returns.[6] The

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1 Arrêté No. 1307, loc. cit., Art. 56. Likewise, the check provided in permitting the electors to watch the count may be evaded by filling the rooms with one's own following. With police power only in the hands of the appointed bureau president, if he so desires, it is quite possible for him to determine the complexion of the witnesses.

2 Ibid., Art. 58.

3 Ibid., Art. 41.

4 The provision for the burning of the ballots immediately after the count would seem to evidence the incorruptibility of election officials. It is perhaps a question whether it is a wise procedure for use among a people who have not yet had much experience with electoral procedure. Even in countries more tried in the machinery of democratic government, the possibility of a recount by different officials has been found valuable.

5 Arrêté No. 1307, loc. cit., Art. 59.

6 Ibid., Art. 60.

electoral operations may be challenged by any elector or any candidate. The appeal must be presented at the office of the administrator within five days of the balloting. A receipt must be given therefor. This appeal is transmitted with the opinion of the administrator to the Ministry of the Interior for submission to the Council of State. A decision, from which no appeal lies, must be rendered within one month. If the President of the Republic finds that the conditions and forms prescribed by the electoral law have not been complied with he must denounce the elections to the Council of State within one month of the election.[3]

Organization and Procedure of Council.

A municipal council may adopt fixed dates for its meetings or may meet merely on call of its president or mayor.[4] In either case, the summons must state the order of the day and the subjects for discussion. The council may concern itself only with those topics cited in the docket. Calling of a meeting is mandatory upon the written request of the administrateur or of one third of the members of the council.[5]

A written summons must be addressed to each councilman at least three days before the scheduled meeting. In cases of urgency, this period may be reduced to twenty-four hours in which case the council decides at the opening of the meeting whether the matter at hand is sufficiently urgent to warrant such a summons. Further, in such cases, the administrateur may upon his own initiative or upon the request of a councilman require a second deliberation upon the same subject. Two copies of the summons, the schedule of meetings, and the order of the day must be transmitted to the [illegible] who forwards one to the administrateur. They must likewise be recorded in the council minutes under penalty of nullification.[6]

The mayor and assistant mayors if any, are appointed by the central authorities from among the council members. The other members rank in accordance with the date of their election, or, the date being the same, in accordance with the size of their electoral vote. Where these are still inconclusive, they rank in accordance with seniority of age.[7]

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1 Arrêté No. 1207, *loc. cit.*, Art. 47, as amended by Arrêté No. 2030 of June 3, 1925, Jour. Off. No. 142, p. 3.

2 Arrêté No. 1208, *loc. cit.*, Art. 34. The former practice is more common among the larger cities, now among the smaller ones.

3 Ibid., Arts. 33 & 34.

4 Arrêté No. 1208, *loc. cit.*, Art. 36.

5 Ibid., Art. 38.

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sess on both sides. In Syria (and to a lesser degree, in Lebanon) the possibility of long-term co-operation between the nationalist politicians and the Mandatory was frustrated alike by the attitude of most French officials and by that of the local urban populations who, though they later signed the 1936 treaty, desired full self-government.[1] The advent to power in France of the Front Populaire in 1936 eased the situation: treaties with Syria and Lebanon were negotiated whereby the Mandate was to be transformed into an alliance with independent states, but under which France could still maintain troops in the Levant. However, the French Parliament was unwilling to ratify the Syrian treaty under the lengthening shadow of the impending Second World War, and Syrian indignation was increased when the need for Turkey's friendship led France in 1939 to cede to Turkey the Sanjaq of Alexandretta, afterwards renamed Hatay. Leading Syrian politicians refused to co-operate with the French on these terms, and on the eve of the outbreak of war the French High Commissioner once again suspended the Syrian constitution and governed the country through French and Syrian officials; the same procedure was applied to Lebanon after the outbreak of war.

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When metropolitan France fell in 1940 the Mandate was carried on by the Vichy Government until the latter's acquiescence in the use of the Levant airfields by the German air force necessitated the intervention of British and Free French forces in June 1941. After a short but bitter campaign, the Vichy forces signed an armistice in July 1941. In the struggle between the Allies and the Axis and between Vichy and de Gaulle the Syrians and Lebanese took no part, but their independence had been promised by the Allied Command. On behalf of the Free French, General Catroux, in a statement on 8 June 1941, proclaimed the end of the Mandate, but in fact the Free French regarded themselves as trustees for France's position, seeking to maintain them by installing Syrian and Lebanese supporters of France in the seats of authority. The Free French had, however, eventually to yield to the demand for popular elections, which was supported by the British Government as soon as the victory at al-Alamain (October 1942) had finally removed the threat of Axis invasion from the Middle East. In Syria the elections of 1943 brought into office the National Bloc with Shukri al-Quwatli as President of the Republic and Saadullah Jabri, Jamil Mardam, and Faris al-Khouri as parliamentary leaders. In the Lebanon also nationalists were successful and the leader of the 'Constitutional Bloc',

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[1] For details, see A. H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon* (London, RIIA, 1946).

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Bishara al-Khouri, became President with the pan-Arab Riyad as-Solh as Prime Minister; these nationalists were not satisfied with mere titular sovereignty but claimed the reality of independence, and in November 1943 a Free French resort to force against them was reversed only by a British intervention, endorsed by the United States Government. The Free French were thus constrained to transfer most branches of the administration to the Syrian and Lebanese Parliaments, but retained control of the local 'Troupes Spéciales' and obstructed the proper equipping of the Syrian gendarmerie. The French intention was to make this vital concession of authority conditional upon the conclusion of a Franco-Syrian treaty which would give France much the same strategic, economic, and cultural advantages as Britain had retained in Iraq by the already obsolescent Treaty of 1930. In March 1945 Syria and Lebanon had been admitted as sovereign states to membership both of the United Nations and of the League of Arab States.

The Syrian nationalists were not prepared to subordinate their sovereignty to an imposed alliance with France, and the landing of a contingent of Senegalese troops immediately after VE-day (in disregard of a personal appeal of Churchill to de Gaulle) was regarded in both Syria and Lebanon as clear evidence of a French resort to coercion. Sporadic outbreaks of violence between the Syrian gendarmerie and the local nationalists on the one hand and the French garrison on the other became general, and when, at the end of May 1945, the local French Commander carried out a bombardment of Damascus the British Government ordered their Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, to intervene, by force if necessary, to restore order in a region whose security was vital for British communications in the still-continuing war in the Far East. The crisis accelerated the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops, concerning which the demands of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments were supported by the Security Council; the process was completed in Syria by 15 April 1946 and in Lebanon by the end of the year.

Between the wars, the French Mandate had allowed political development in Lebanon to produce at least a façade of parliamentary democracy, with arrangements between the Muslim and Christian leaders on the division of political power and prerogatives, and the active commercial and intellectual life of Lebanon made progress with a minimum of government interference. In Syria, however, local separatisms which French policy had encouraged made it very difficult for any Syrian Government to knit the people together from Damascus; the

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In Lebanon the preparations for the elections took longer to complete. The main question at issue was that of the distribution of seats in the new Chamber. It was agreed that the Chamber should consist only of elected members, not as previously of a majority of elected and a minority of nominated ones; but Dr. Tabit's suggestions for allocating seats between the sects were opposed by the Moslems. M. Hoffer, who had succeeded General Catroux as Delegate-General in June, was compelled to replace Dr. Tabit by Petro Trad; and finally an agreed settlement was reached by which the Christian sects would have 30 seats and the Moslems 25.

Elections were held at the end of August. As in previous elections, the differences between the candidates were largely personal; but there was also a conflict of principle involved, the more extreme supporters of Lebanese independence, with Emile Edde as their most prominent figure, being opposed by the more moderate advocates of autonomy, led by Bishara al-Khuri, and the Arab nationalists. The former were completely defeated in spite of the support given them by the French authorities. On September 21st the Chamber met and elected Bishara al-Khuri President of the Republic by 44 votes to nil.

The new President asked Riyadh as-Sulh to form a Ministry. A Sunni Moslem, by origin from Southern Lebanon, Riyadh as-Sulh had for long been recognized as one of the leaders of the Arab nationalists in Lebanon, and had been an associate of Shukri al-Quwatli in the 'Istiqlal' group.

The new Ministry was composed as follows :—

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	Riyadh as-Sulh.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Education	Habib Abu Shahla.
Minister of the Interior and of Posts and Telegraphs ..	Camille Shamoun.
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Works	Salim Taqla.
Minister of Defence and Hygiene	Amir Majid Arslan.
Minister of Food Supply and National Economy	Adil Usayran.

of the minority problem contained in it was satisfactory. When the Treaty was ratified, it would firmly establish on a contractual basis a French influence which the too-long maintenance of an authoritarian régime might in the long run compromise.

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In Lebanon the signature of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty was welcomed by the Maronites and some other sections of the population. The Sunnis, however, regarded it as a blow to their aim of reunion with Syria; their anger found expression in communal clashes in Beirut and elsewhere at the end of 1936. In spite of their opposition, however, steps were immediately taken to carry out the policy of the Treaty by re-establishing self-governing institutions. The Constitution of 1926 was restored in January, 1937; the Chamber met, and Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, a Sunni, formed a Ministry. But it soon became apparent that the signature of the Treaty and the revival of constitutional forms had not affected the essential nature of Lebanese political life, which continued to be dominated by sectarian issues.

A new electoral law was passed in 1937, replacing the existing Chamber by a new and larger one, two-thirds elected on a sectarian basis and one-third nominated. The elections of November, 1937, were marked by corruption on an extensive scale; and the Chamber which resulted from them, and which remained in being until 1939, was remarkable only for the bitterness and complexity of its internal dissensions. The Ministries of the Amir Khalid Shihab and Abdallah al-Yafi succeeded those of Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, and none of them had any notable legislative or other advance to show.

The consequence of this was a general loss of interest and faith in the constitutional system as it existed in Lebanon. It was not simply that the established leaders and the parliamentary parties, the Unionists, Constitutionalists and so on, ceased to possess even so limited a hold over public opinion as they had perhaps had; more than that, Lebanese began to ask themselves what purpose was served by the existence of a costly Parliament, filled with landowners and lawyers, wasting its time in internecine quarrels and showing no effective interest in the country's welfare. Had not Lebanon been better ruled under the simple system which had existed

before 1924; and was it not ridiculous, as well as expensive, for so small a region to have so grandiose and complex a constitution?

As a further consequence, the movement of discontent with sectarianism was greatly strengthened, and many Lebanese, especially among the young, began to look for an alternative. At one extreme the "Phalanges Libanaises", the party of Lebanese nationalism, received much support. So too did the "Syrian National Party", with its doctrine of the total separation of Church and State; while the Arab Nationalists pointed to the failure of the constitutional system as a proof, if one were needed, that an independent Lebanon was too divided, artificial and unstable to exist by itself.

In Syria, the first steps towards the execution of the Treaty were taken immediately after the return of the Syrian delegation from Paris. Arrangements were made for the holding of Parliamentary elections; the Chamber was to consist of 82 members, 16 of them representing the religious minorities and 7 the Bedouin tribes. The elections, which took place in November, 1936, resulted in an overwhelming majority for the candidates of the National Bloc; and when the Chamber met, on December 21st, its first important act was to choose Faris al-Khuri as its President, and its second to accept the resignation of Muhammad Ali al-Abid from the Presidency of the Republic and to elect Hashim al-Atasi in his place. The Ayyubi Ministry having resigned, the President entrusted the formation of a new one to Jamil Mardam Bey. All the members of his Ministry were drawn from the National Bloc.

This Ministry found no difficulty in securing the confidence of the Chamber, which unanimously approved the Treaty in December, 1936. It was formally signed by the High Commissioner and the members of the Ministry on December 22nd.

In the same month, after consultations with notables of the districts of Jebel Druze and Latakia, their annexation to the Syrian State was proclaimed. This proclamation was accompanied by special Statutes granting a measure of administrative autonomy to the two regions. Despite protests from separatist groups against the concept of a unitary Syria, the régime envisaged in these Statutes was inaugurated by the appointment in January, 1937, of two prominent members of the